

UNUSUAL DIET FOR *TENEBRIO MOLITOR* LINN.

The common tenebrionid beetle, *Tenebrio molitor* Linn., which is found in many biology laboratories, can be reared with a minimum of care. It is useful as a food supply for most terraria and aquaria inhabitants.

These beetles customarily feed upon plant materials. According to the U.S.D.A., Tech. Bul., 95, 1929 and the recent entomological textbook, *An Introduction to the Study of Insects* by Borrer and DeLong, they are often found in stored grains and have been known to infest the stored cereal used to feed caged birds. The female lays the whitish, oval eggs singly or in clusters within the food material on hand. These food materials serve as nutriment for the larvae. The eggs hatch from within four to eighteen days into white larvae which become yellow in color as they grow. They are one to one and one-half inches in length when fully grown, and they are commonly known as mealworms.

While raising these beetles for various experiments, a few wandering larvae were observed to have left the culture and were feeding on a preserved grasshopper, *Dissosteira carolina* Linn., which was in a corked vial. This unusual meal had been reached by the larvae by tunnelling through the cork, as was evident from fine cork dust within and just outside the vial. These larvae were left with their strange diet and observed for several weeks. The grasshopper was gradually eaten away, and finally two pupae were seen in the vial. These pupae, upon becoming adult, trod the original route and left the vial. Thus, we have this unusual circumstance of a beetle commonly regarded as herbivorous only, consuming dried, preserved, insect material.—JAMES A. MULLEN, Department of Biology, Fordham University.